



Eileen Donoghue  
City Manager

R01-19-A-015

**Narrative Information Sheet**

- 1. Applicant Identification**

City of Lowell, Massachusetts  
Department of Planning and Development  
JFK Civic Center, 50 Arcand Drive  
Lowell, MA 01852
- 2. Funding Requested**
  - a. Assessment Grant Type: Site-Specific
  - b. i. Federal Funds Requested: \$350,000  
ii. Requesting Waiver of \$200,000 Limit
  - c. Contamination: Hazardous Substances
- 3. Location**

Lowell, Middlesex County, Massachusetts
- 4. Site-Specific Proposal**

Former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation  
1050 Gorham Street, Lowell, MA 01852
- 5. Contacts**
  - a. Project Director**

Sarah Brown  
Environmental Officer  
City of Lowell  
Department of Planning and Development  
JFK Civic Center, 50 Arcand Drive  
Lowell, MA 01852  
Tel: (978) 674-4252  
E-mail: [sbrown@lowellma.gov](mailto:sbrown@lowellma.gov)
  - b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official**

Eileen Donoghue  
City Manager  
City of Lowell  
375 Merrimack Street  
Lowell, MA 01852  
Tel: (978) 674-4000  
E-mail: [edonoghue@lowellma.gov](mailto:edonoghue@lowellma.gov)



**6. Population** 109,349

**7. Other Factors Checklist** None of the Other Factors apply to this project.

Other Factors	Page #
Community Population is 10,000 or less.	NA
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	NA
The priority brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	NA
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	NA
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	NA
The redevelopment of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy; or any energy efficiency improvement projects.	NA
30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse planning activities for priority brownfield site(s) within the target area.	NA

**8. Letter from State or Tribal Environmental Authority** See attached (MassDEP)



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

# Department of Environmental Protection

One Winter Street Boston, MA 02108 • 617-292-5500

Charles D. Baker  
Governor

Karyn E. Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Matthew A. Beaton  
Secretary

Martin Suuberg  
Commissioner

January 16, 2019

U.S. EPA New England  
Attn: Frank Gardner  
5 Post Office Square, Suite 100  
Boston, MA 02109-3912

**RE: STATE LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT**  
***City of Lowell, Brownfield Assessment Grant Funding, Commonwealth Chemical Corporation, 1052 Gorham Street***

Dear Mr. Gardner:

I am writing to support the proposal submitted by the City of Lowell (City) under the Fiscal Year 2019 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Assessment Grant Program. Funding from EPA will allow the City to continue with its investigation of the former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation at 1052 Gorham Street, which requires assessment under the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for documented releases of hazardous materials. At this time, the City is evaluating potential redevelopment options for this property.

On January 23, 2015, Governor Baker signed his first Executive Order, creating the Community Compact Cabinet, in order to elevate the Administration's partnerships with cities and towns across the Commonwealth. Lieutenant Governor Polito chairs the cabinet, which concentrates financial, technical, and other resources at the state level to a select group of projects, including Brownfields. The City's compact was signed on March 31, 2016, ensuring any funding provided by EPA will be supported by a focused commitment of state resources.

We greatly appreciate EPA's continued support of Brownfield efforts here in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Paul Locke  
Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup

cc: Sarah Brown, City of Lowell  
Joanne Fagan, Brownfields Coordinator, MassDEP-NERO

This information is available in alternate format. Call the MassDEP Diversity Office at 617-556-1139. TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370

MassDEP Website: [www.mass.gov/dep](http://www.mass.gov/dep)

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**CITY OF LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS – FORMER COMMONWEALTH CHEMICAL CORPORATION  
EPA BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION**

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**1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION**

**1.a. Target Area and Brownfields**

**1.a.i. Background and Description of Target Area**

The City of Lowell is a diverse urban community built primarily around an extensive industrial mill network along the Merrimack and Concord Rivers and 5.6 miles of man-made canals. Currently home to 106,519 people, Lowell is said to be the nation's first planned industrial City which surged to prominence during America's Industrial Revolution. Lowell's 14 square miles are almost completely built out with historic mills and industrial buildings adjacent to high-density residential neighborhoods.

Following World War I, Lowell saw a significant decline in manufacturing. This decline persisted throughout much of the 20th century and resulted in large-scale disinvestment and decay. With a critical shortage of developable land and a lack of modern industrial space, Lowell has found it challenging to attract job-producing industrial businesses to the area. Over the past several decades, successful local manufacturers have been forced to relocate out of Lowell due to the lack of suitable expansion sites. The resulting abandoned industrial structures have created unintended public health and safety hazards for residents along with a significant loss of jobs and economic development struggles within a City once proud of being synonymous with the American Dream.

New arrivals to Lowell, a city of immigrants, traditionally provided the workforce to build the City's industrial base and create solid, middle-class neighborhoods starting with the Irish immigration of the 19th century. Since 1980, Lowell has experienced significant growth in its minority population, estimated at 59.3% of its overall population (2010 U.S. Census). Today, Cambodians, Lowell's largest ethnic minority and approximately 20 percent of the total City population have experienced, first hand, the impacts resulting from the loss of manufacturing jobs. They are willing and able to provide the manufacturing labor for the twenty-first century, but Lowell's industrial base has eroded away from them.

The focus of this application will be directed toward the former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation site, a vacant and neglected former industrial property located approximately one (1) mile south of Lowell's central business district. The property is also located less than one-eighth mile to the east of **Ayer's City Industrial Park**, a largely vacant and underutilized industrial area which was the subject of a planning effort funded through an **EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Grant** awarded in 2010.

The property is bounded by Gorham Street to the west, and the Boston and Maine Railroad/Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority tracks to the east. Commercial properties, including a restaurant and auto service shop, and multi-family residential properties immediately abut the site. The Butler and Shaughnessy Elementary Schools are located less than one-eighth mile to the south.

### **1.a.ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s)**

The former Commonwealth Chemical site has been utilized for the storage of coal, petroleum products, and chemicals since the early 1900s. Historic records of ownership show the property was owned by Lajoie Coal Company from 1916 until 1930, Cities Services Oil/Refining Company from 1930 until 1970, and Charles Atkinson from 1972 until 2012. Charles Atkinson leased the property to Commonwealth Chemical from 1975 to 1983 for use as a chemical and fuel oil storage facility.

In 1979, a downgradient property owner issued a complaint to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Division of Water Pollution Control stating that liquid had been flowing onto his property since 1975 resulting in **flash fires, flooding, and obnoxious odors**. During initial assessment and remedial activities conducted in the early 1980s, EPA and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) identified and removed 35 tanks containing petroleum and chemicals, along with hundreds of drums and drum remnants, at or adjacent to the property. Additionally, EPA sampled soil, installed/sampled wells, and installed two collection ponds and an oil water separator.

Contaminated groundwater and some surface water runoff from the Site flows into two manmade ponds, constructed by MassDEP in 1984. Water from the ponds flows into a single oil water separator and then discharges to a catch basin located at the edge of a parking lot at the back of an abutting property to the north. The catch basin is connected to the combined municipal sanitary sewer system on Gorham Street.

Between 1985 and 1987, additional assessment was performed by a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) contracted with MassDEP, culminating in the production of a feasibility study. The feasibility study recommended a combination of capping, partial soil excavation, and onsite subsurface drainage; however, no remedial recommendations were implemented.

The site languished until 2003, when another MassDEP contracted QEP completed a Phase II Addendum. An electromagnetic survey was conducted to search for any remaining buried tanks and drums at the property. Several areas were identified as possible buried tanks or drums; however, these areas were never fully investigated following the survey. In addition to the geophysics, the contractor collected samples from the collection ponds and oil water separator, advanced 18 soil borings, installed 12 new wells, and sampled 38 wells. The Phase II Addendum report contained no additional recommendations for assessment or remediation.

Through cooperation with MassDEP, the City of Lowell gained possession of the former Commonwealth Chemical site by tax title default in 2012. As a result, Lowell maintains environmental liability protection as long as the City acts to diligently divest itself of ownership of the Site. While multiple parties have expressed interest to the City in redeveloping the site, the uncertainty surrounding the extent of contamination combined with the unknown costs for remediation have hindered any forward progress. To that end, the City of Lowell is interested in assessing the property to position the site for the next steps toward redevelopment.

The City of Lowell contracted with Watermark Environmental, Inc. (Watermark) in September 2018 to conduct an updated, baseline assessment of the site. As part of their work, Watermark conducted a fence inspection, water level measurements, a well condition assessment, a hazardous materials inspection of the existing, vacant building, collected groundwater samples, collection system effluent samples, and surface soil samples. Analytical results showed an array of contaminants detected including **VOCs, PAHs, metals, EPH and VPH** for which the extent is currently unknown. Additionally, it is unclear as to whether or not the previously identified subsurface anomalies are a continued source of contamination at the site. Watermark provided recommendations and costs for additional assessment activities for which the City of Lowell is seeking funding for under this grant application.

### **1.b. Revitalization of the Target Area**

#### **1.b.i. Redevelopment Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans**

The former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation site is located on a main thoroughfare in an area zoned for traditional mixed-use (TMU). Abutting properties include restaurants, businesses and residences. This location, combined with an approximately one (1) acre site, positions this property to be highly desirable for redevelopment. The City of Lowell has received numerous inquiries about the property since its acquisition in 2012, however; the unknown assessment and remedial costs have prevented any projects from moving forward.

More recently, the City has been approached by a prominent community-based nonprofit to relocate and expand its existing mattress recycling facility in Lowell. The nonprofit serves young adults with histories of incarceration or other proven risk factors. Their core programming serves about 150 at-risk youth each year and is centered around paid employment and training in various social enterprises.

Plans for the mattress recycling facility include constructing a new 30,000 square foot building that will house mattress recycling, textile recycling, and product manufacturing from reclaimed materials with an added retail space. This proposed end use for the site directly aligns with the goals outlined in *“Sustainable Lowell 2025,”* the City of Lowell’s Comprehensive Master Plan, which was the result of an extensive planning process that took place between 2011 and 2013 with substantial public participation, data collection and analysis. Goals from *“Sustainable Lowell 2025”* applicable to this project include:

*“Lowell will strive to create a healthy, self-sufficient local economy that will be sustainable in the face of looming macroeconomic changes. To accomplish this goal, the City will seek to improve education and increase the competitiveness of its workforce, help the City’s existing institutions and businesses to thrive, encourage creative and environmentally-friendly development and redevelopment, and spur job-growth by both targeting growing industry sectors and cultivating a new generation of local entrepreneurs.”*

and;

*“Repurpose vacant or under-utilized spaces for new, creative uses to eliminate blight that may discourage investment in surrounding properties.”*

### 1.b.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Redevelopment Strategy

As part of the Comprehensive Master Plan, the City is actively seeking to repurpose vacant, blighted, under-utilized land in an effort to create a healthy and sustainable local economy and sustainable neighborhoods. Redeveloping the former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation site with a light-industrial/commercial use will be consistent with the site's previous use and the current neighborhood character. Additionally, the proposed redevelopment plans align with recent collaborations between the City of Lowell and both **Smart Growth America** and the **Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership** which intend to support and attract small-scale manufacturing to help fill vacant commercial and industrial space throughout the City.

Expected economic benefits include job creation and tax revenue generation, however; non-economic benefits including increased public safety, workforce development, and improvements to sustainability are also projected outcomes.

### 1.c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

#### 1.c.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse

Through a strong history of utilizing EPA grants to leverage additional public and private funding for Brownfields redevelopment, more than **\$100 million** of estimated investment has been made as a result of the Lowell Brownfields Program. More recently, through Lowell's partnership with Winn Development, an estimated \$60 million will be spent to develop up to 150 mixed-income housing units on Parcels 8 & 9 in the Hamilton Canal District. Additionally, Lowell has leveraged \$4.7 million from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts MassWorks Program and \$2.5 million in U.S. Economic Development Administration funding for the construction of roadways and a signature bridge in this same area which began in 2018. These investments are built upon the environmental assessment and remediation conducted by the City of Lowell utilizing EPA Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup grant programs. They serve as a clear example of the City's ability to utilize multiple funding sources for the revitalization of these types of properties. The City of Lowell is eligible for the following additional funding sources, among others, should a project require it:

Source	Purpose/Role
HUD CDBG	Site Remediation and Development
EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant	Site Remediation
MassDevelopment	Site Redevelopment Costs, Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup

#### 1.c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure

No new infrastructure is required for redevelopment of the former Commonwealth Chemical site. The property is currently serviced by existing connections to water, sewer, and power. Some minor repairs may need to be made to those connections during construction, however; the size and capacity of the services provided from Gorham Street is sufficient for site reuse.

When the site is redeveloped, consideration should be made toward reconstruction of the sidewalk fronting on Gorham Street. The sidewalk is not currently well-defined, however; it is heavily used by students walking to and from the Butler and Shaughnessy Elementary Schools approximately one-eighth mile south of the property.

## **2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **2.a. Community Need**

#### **2.a.i. The Community's Need for Funding**

Lowell is designated a Massachusetts "Gateway City." Gateway Cities are defined as *"midsize urban centers that anchor regional economies around the state"* which are facing *"stubborn social and economic challenges"* while retaining *"many assets with unrealized potential."* Gateway Cities commonly lack the resources and capacity to rebuild and are slow to draw new economy to invest.

Since the early 2000s, Lowell has been greatly impacted by shifts in the nation's economy with little evident recovery as compared to surrounding communities. As a broader impact of the economic downturn, household incomes have failed to keep pace with the increases in housing costs that occurred in the Lowell area during the housing boom of the early 2000s. As of the 2010 U.S. Census, 32.7% of Lowell residents earned less than 80% of the area median income. Census data indicates the median household income is \$50,192 and per capita income is \$22,730. Over 17% of people in Lowell live in poverty, approximately 3 percentage points higher than the national poverty rate.

One of the biggest challenges the City faces is recruiting and/or retaining larger companies to employ its population. The majority of the existing commercial/industrial space is inadequate, blighted, and perceived to have contamination issues. Often larger companies are looking to move into existing retrofitted buildings and cannot afford to wait or invest in major redevelopment projects. As a result, these companies locate in surrounding communities where there are newer buildings on clean sites. Utilizing EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant funding to eliminate the uncertainty in the extent of contamination and determining the costs for remediation is a critical first step for the City of Lowell in attracting and retaining new businesses.

#### **2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations**

##### **(1) Health or Welfare**

The former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation site is located approximately one-eighth of a mile north of the Butler and Shaughnessy Elementary Schools. Students in Lowell often walk to and from school and many pass this property on a daily basis. Potential impacts to the health and welfare of sensitive populations, particularly these students, are as follows:

**Abandoned and Blighted Property:** The site has been vacant since 1983, when contamination was first discovered, posing a potential risk to public safety. One building at the site burned down and subsequently had to be demolished by the City in 2013. Inspection of the fencing at



the property showed a number of breaks and there have been repeated reports of homeless encampments that the City has had to address.

**Crime and Illegal Dumping:** A review of data from the Lowell Police Department Crime Analysis/Intelligence Unit, shows 54 incidences of aggravated assault, burglary, car breaks, disorderly conduct, shoplifting, and vandalism in the area of the property in 2018. Illegal dumping is a common occurrence. Most often, old, damaged cars are found abandoned in front of the remaining building.

**Health:** The extent of contamination at the site is currently unknown.

## (2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions

According to the most recent data available from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the prevalence of asthma is 13% among children in the City of Lowell. This number is noticeably higher than the state average of 10.9% and the national prevalence rate of 8.6%. Data collected by Professor David Turcotte, Sc.D. and the Asthma Coalition at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell shows emergency room visit hospitalizations for respiratory system diseases have had an apparent upward trend since 1995. Additionally, Lowell is identified as a **high risk community** for childhood lead poisoning in Massachusetts. The rate for childhood lead poisoning in the City is approximately 4.7 for every 1000 children between the ages of 9 to 47 months.

Potential exposure to a host of contaminants including **VOCs, SVOCs, PCBs, metals** and **petroleum** products, as found at the for Commonwealth Chemical Corporation site, could result in increased rates of asthma and lead poisoning in sensitive populations, as well as increased rates of cancer and other critical health issues.

## (3) Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations

3. Data Subject	City (Lowell)	State (Massachusetts)	National
Population	109,349	6,705,586	316,127,513
Poverty Rate	19.8%	11.6%	15.5%
Percent Minority	50.5%	25.6%	37.8%
Asian	21.5%	6.0%	6.1%
Median Household Income	\$48,002	\$68,563	\$53,889
Per Capita Income	\$22,637	\$36,895	\$28,930
*Data collected from 2010 U.S. Census			

According to 2010 Census data noted above, Lowell is considered an environmental justice community. Lowell residents suffer from a disproportionately higher share of environmental burdens than residents in surrounding suburban communities. The former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation site is only one of over 550 documented releases of hazardous materials

according to the MassDEP’s Searchable Sites List, a listing of all contaminated properties reported in the State. It is expected that redevelopment of the site will result in job creation, the surrounding neighborhood will see increased property values and young students will have a safer path to school.

### **3.a. Community Engagement**

#### **3.a.i. Community Involvement**

<b>Partner Name</b>	<b>Point of Contact</b>	<b>Specific Role in the Project</b>
Riverside Community Council/Sacred Heart Neighborhood Improvement Group	Elaine Pantano Elaine.Pantano@comcast.net (978)458-6572	Neighborhood Communication and Coordination, Involvement in the cleanup/reuse planning process
	Carol McCarthy Cmccarthy64@comcast.net (978)866-3181	
Lowell Community Health Center	Susan West Levine	Communication of Health Information to the Public
	SusanLe@lchealth.org	
	(978)746-7870	

#### **3.a.ii. Incorporating Community Input**

Lowell is fully committed to engaging the community in the execution of this grant award. Community outreach and stakeholder involvement is critical to its success. The City has already undertaken efforts to meet and communicate with business owners and property owners immediately abutting the former Commonwealth Chemical site. It is anticipated the City will hold one or more meetings with these stakeholders, as well as host public meetings to ensure all interested parties are aware of Brownfields plans and progress. The City also recognizes these meetings will be an opportunity to educate residents and stakeholders about the process of prioritizing and assessing potential Brownfields sites. The Department of Planning and Development employs a full-time Neighborhood Planner to communicate with neighborhood groups about upcoming Brownfields work. The City of Lowell will use a combination of flyers, public and stakeholder meetings, local media and newspapers, social media, the City website and a document repository for community engagement.

Due to Lowell’s diverse population, translation services are available in languages including Khmer, Spanish and Portuguese at public meetings upon request. All materials on the City website, flyers, and answers to any questions at meetings can also be translated upon request.

## **4. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS**

### **4.a. Description of Tasks and Activities**

Task 1 – Cooperative Agreement Oversight - The City of Lowell Environmental Officer will provide Cooperative Agreement Oversight for the grant through a combination of personnel costs and in-kind services. The Environmental Officer will be responsible for completing performance and financial monitoring requirements (including updating ACRES), communication with the EPA Project Officer, procuring and overseeing a Qualified

Environmental Professional (**QEP**), securing site access and attendance at **EPA Brownfields Conferences**.

Task 2 – Community Outreach & Engagement - This task includes presentation preparation, advertising, materials, translation services, and the QEP's time to attend public meetings as necessary.

Task 3 – Phase II/Supplemental Assessment – Work under this task will be performed by a QEP who is also a Massachusetts Licensed Site Professional. Phase II/Supplemental Assessment will be conducted in accordance with an **EPA-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)** and MassDEP regulations.

Task 4 – Cleanup Planning – Work under this task will be performed by a QEP who is also a Massachusetts Licensed Site Professional. Development of the Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) will follow **EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response Principles for Greener Cleanups**.

#### 4.b. Cost Estimates and Outputs

Budget Categories	Project Tasks (\$)				
	Task 1 (Cooperative Agreement Oversight)	Task 2 (Community Involvement)	Task 3 (Phase II/Supplemental Assessment)	Task 4 (Cleanup Planning)	Total
Personnel	\$20,000				\$20,000
Fringe Benefits					
Travel	\$5,000				\$5,000
Equipment					
Supplies					
Contractual		\$5,000	\$270,000	\$50,000	\$325,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$270,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>

#### Task 1 – Cooperative Agreement Oversight

- Personnel Costs: **500 hours** (approx. 3hrs/week) at an average rate of **\$40/hr = \$20,000**
- Travel Costs: **Two (2)** City of Lowell employees to attend at **two (2) EPA Brownfields Conferences = \$5,000**

**Outputs:** ACRES updates, quarterly reports (MBE/WBE Reports, grant completion, and any additional EPA requirements), attendance at EPA Brownfields Conferences, communication with the EPA Project Officer and QEP oversight.

#### Task 2 – Community Outreach & Engagement

- Contractual Costs estimated at approximately **\$5,000**

**Outputs:** Presentations, Advertising, Translation Services, Public Meeting Attendance by QEP

Task 3 – Phase II/Supplemental Assessment

- Contractual Costs: **One (1)** Phase II/Supplemental Site Assessment **\$270,000** (based on Watermark Cost Estimate)

**Outputs:** One (1) Phase II/Supplemental Site Assessment and Report, Site-Specific QAPP

Task 4 – Cleanup Planning

- Contractual Costs: **One (1)** Site Cleanup Plans at an estimated cost of **\$50,000**

**Outputs:** One (1) Site Cleanup Plans

**4.c. Measuring Environmental Results**

Expected outputs for this grant include a site assessment report, a minimum of one (1) public meeting held, and a cleanup planning document. All of these items will be tracked internally, through submittal to the EPA Project Officer, as well as in ACRES.

Expected outcomes for this grant likely cannot entirely be measured within the project period. However, this project will continue to be updated in ACRES following the expiration of the grant period. It is expected once the site is fully assessed, the City will work with prospective developers to remediate and redevelop the property. Assistance in tracking job creation and economic development benefits will be provided by Andrew Shapiro, the City of Lowell's Economic Development Director.

**5. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

**5.a. Programmatic Capability**

**5.a.i. Organizational Structure**

EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant management and reporting will be coordinated by a full-time Environmental Officer, Sarah Brown, who has been a member of the staff for approximately ten (10) years, has a degree in environmental engineering, has over 5 years of experience in environmental consulting and has successfully managed seven (7) previous EPA Brownfields Grants. The Environmental Officer will be supported by a team of personnel in the Department of Planning and Development including the City's Urban Renewal Project Manager, Joe Giniewicz, and the City's Chief Planner, Claire Ricker. Financial management of the grant will be conducted by the Environmental Officer with the assistance of a highly qualified accounting team in the Department of Planning and Development. All staff has extensive experience in managing multiple Federal and State grant programs for brownfields, parks and redevelopment projects including (but not limited to) CDBG, HOME, MassWorks Infrastructure grants and US Department of Transportation TIGER grants. This experience ensures that the City will complete the timely and successful expenditure of EPA funds.

All legal assistance related to grant management can be provided in house by the City of Lowell's Law Department. The City Solicitor, Christine O'Connor, has assisted in review of contracts and site access acquisition for all EPA Brownfields Grants managed by the City over the past ten (10) years.

### 5.a.ii. Acquiring Additional Resources

In order to appropriately acquire any additional expertise and resources required to successfully complete grant activities, the City of Lowell will seek to procure a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) through a “Request for Qualifications” (RFQ) process as outlined in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts procurement regulations under the Uniform Procurement Act, M.G.L. Chapter 30B. RFQs are a competitive bidding process that is coordinated through the City’s Chief Procurement Officer, P. Michael Vaughn, and the Law Department. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant funding will be divided into contracts for one or more QEPs. The time from RFQ to completed contracts is approximately three (3) months.

### 5.b. Past Performance and Accomplishments

#### 5.b.i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant

##### (1) Accomplishments

Lowell has a long history of successful grant management with EPA grant funding. The City has had the opportunity to manage numerous EPA funded grant activities throughout the years, most notably, Showcase Community Funding (\$600,000), staffing an EPA employee through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA), and a Superfund Redevelopment Initiative grant (\$100,000). In recent years, the City has been awarded \$1,175,000 in grant funds, including:

Grant Name	Grant Period	Award	Funds Remaining
FY 2009 Brownfields Cleanup Grant (193.1 & 293.1 Jackson Street)	10/01/2010-10/01/2014	\$400,000	\$0
FY 2010 Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot (ACIP Plan)	11/01/2010-12/31/2012	\$175,000	\$0
FY2014 Brownfields Assessment Grant (Hazardous Substances)	10/1/2014 – 09/30/2018	\$200,000	\$1.28

Under the above listed grants, Lowell has assessed three (3) sites, cleaned up two (2) sites and completed one Area-Wide Planning process. All sites are currently up-to-date in the Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES). A review of ACRES shows approximately 50 sites have been assessed and/or cleaned up with EPA Brownfields funding as part of the Lowell Brownfields Program. All sites were up-to-date at the time of review.

##### (2) Compliance with Grant Requirements

For the duration of all previously held Brownfields grants, the City worked diligently to remain in compliance with all grant requirements, including work plans, schedules for the expenditure of these funds, terms and conditions, and all required quarterly and ACRES reporting.

The City of Lowell is not currently managing an assessment grant. For the closed grants listed in Section 4.b.i.(1), all funds were expended by the end of their respective extended grant periods with the exception of the most recent Brownfields Assessment Grant. The remaining \$1.28 was due to hourly billing rates.

**City of Lowell – Former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation – Site-Specific  
Assessment Grant Proposal Threshold Criteria**

**1. Applicant Eligibility**

The City of Lowell, Department of Planning and Development (DPD), is an eligible applicant as a unit of local government.

**2. Community Involvement**

Lowell is fully committed to engaging the community in the execution of this grant. The City of Lowell will use a combination of the following approaches for community involvement:

- **Flyers** to announce public meetings and communicate important updates.
- **Public, Neighborhood, and Stakeholder Meetings** in a meeting location convenient to the affected residents, businesses and property owners.
- **Local media (Lowell Sun newspaper)** will provide notice of upcoming meetings.
- **Social Media/City Website** will be kept up-to-date with the latest information and announce any upcoming meetings. The City of Lowell maintains Facebook and Twitter accounts, as well as maintains several e-mail-based mailing lists.
- **Document Repository** will contain all assessment reports and be accessible to the public, upon request.

**3. Expenditure of Assessment Grant Funds**

The City of Lowell does not currently have an active EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant.

**Additional Threshold Criteria for Site-Specific Proposals Only**

**1. Basic Site Information**

- a) Former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation Site
- b) 1050 Gorham Street, Lowell, MA 01852
- c) City of Lowell

**2. Status and History of Contamination at the Site**

- a) Hazardous Substances
- b) Operational History and Current Use(s)

The former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation site is a vacant and neglected former industrial property located approximately one (1) mile south of Lowell's central business district. The former Commonwealth Chemical site has been utilized for the storage of coal, petroleum products, and chemicals since the early 1900s. Historic records of ownership show the property was owned by Lajoie Coal Company from 1916 until 1930, Cities Services Oil/Refining Company from 1930 until 1970, and Charles Atkinson from 1972 until 2012. Charles Atkinson leased the property to

Commonwealth Chemical from 1975 to 1983 for use as a chemical and fuel oil storage facility.

c) **Environmental Concerns**

Through previous investigations the site is determined to have reportable concentrations of contaminants under 310 CMR 40.000 Massachusetts Contingency Plan. A 2003 geophysical survey detected anomalies in the subsurface that could be possible sources of contamination. An abandoned building remains at the site and poses a public health and safety risk.

d) **How the Site Became Contaminated/Nature and Extent of Contamination**  
Past use of the site as storage for coal, petroleum products and chemicals resulted in contamination. Contaminants detected include: VOCs, PAHs, metals, EPH and VPH in groundwater and soil. The full extent of contamination is currently unknown.

**3. Brownfields Site Definition**

The site is not:

- a) listed or proposed for listing on the National Priorities List,
- b) subject to unilateral administrative orders, court orders, administrative orders on consent, or judicial consent decrees issued to or entered into by parties under CERCLA; and
- c) subject to the jurisdiction, custody, or control of the U.S. government.

**4. Enforcement or Other Actions**

There are no known ongoing or anticipated environmental enforcement or other actions related to the site for which Brownfields funding is sought. The previous owner of the property and/or responsible party for the contamination, Charles Atkinson, is deceased and has no known heirs. Commonwealth Chemical Corporation is a now defunct entity. The City of Lowell acquired the property via tax foreclosure in 2012.

On June 29, 1984, the Department of Environmental Quality Engineering of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts issued an environmental lien (recorded at the Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Book 2845 Page 219) in the amount of \$46,409.42 to Charles Atkinson. The City of Lowell is exempt from this lien due to the exemptions in liability it holds under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 21E *Massachusetts Oil and Hazardous Material Release Prevention Act*, as a result of the tax foreclosure process.

**5. Sites Requiring a Property-Specific Determination**

This site does not need a Property-Specific Determination.

**6. Threshold Criteria Related to CERCLA/Petroleum Liability**

**a. Property Ownership Eligibility – Hazardous Substances Sites**

**i. EXEMPTIONS TO CERCLA LIABILITY**

**(4) Property Acquired Under Certain Circumstances by Units of State and Local Government**

(a) The City of Lowell acquired the property via tax foreclosure.

(b) Final Judgment was filed on November 19, 2012.

(c) Disposal of hazardous substances occurred prior to City ownership of the property and prior to 1983.

(d) The City of Lowell has not, at any time, arranged for the disposal of hazardous substances at the site or transported hazardous substances to the site.



## **7. Waiver of the \$200,000 Limit**

The City of Lowell is requesting a waiver of the \$200,000 limit and is seeking \$350,000 for the assessment of the former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation site.

The former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation site is an approximately one (1) acre former industrial property with fifty-one monitoring wells, two (2) groundwater collection system ponds and an oil water separator. Soil and groundwater at the property has been impacted with oil and hazardous materials resulting from the storage of oil and hazardous materials at the site dating back to the early 1900s. While various assessments have taken place since 1983, the full nature and extent of contamination has not yet been determined. It's unclear from previous investigations as to whether or not potential sources of contamination remain buried on the site as geophysical anomalies have been detected in previous geophysical surveys.

In September 2018, Watermark Environmental, Inc., on behalf of the City of Lowell, performed assessment activities at the former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation site which are summarized in a Data Summary Report completed in the same month. Watermark's field program was conducted between September 5 and September 7, 2018 and included a reconnaissance/inspection of site monitoring wells, hazardous materials inspection inside a vacant building at the property, water level measurements, perimeter fence inspection, collection of surface soil samples, groundwater samples from three existing monitoring wells, and collection of one groundwater collection system effluent sample. The objectives of field activities were to evaluate current groundwater and surface soil quality in order to develop a path forward to achieve regulatory compliance and eventual redevelopment of the property.

Based on the results of the investigation and previous work performed at the site, the recommendations for future assessment include the following:

- Repair and/or replace all fifty-one monitoring wells and/or soil gas probes
- Soil sampling to better define the extent of soil impacts and provide CAM-compliant data
- Test pit excavations to assess geophysical anomalies
- Comprehensive groundwater sampling round and survey
- Periodic sampling of effluent from groundwater discharge system
- Quarterly sampling in select wells to evaluate seasonal evaluations
- Installation of a metering/sampling manhole for monitoring purposes
- Cleanup planning

Watermark's cost estimates for this additional assessment range from \$250,000 to \$400,000.

## Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

\* 1. Type of Submission:

- ☐ Preapplication  
☒ Application  
☐ Changed/Corrected Application

\* 2. Type of Application:

- ☒ New  
☐ Continuation  
☐ Revision

\* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):

\* Other (Specify):

\* 3. Date Received:

01/31/2019

4. Applicant Identifier:

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:

5b. Federal Award Identifier:

### State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:

7. State Application Identifier:

### 8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

\* a. Legal Name:

City of Lowell, MA

\* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):

046001396

\* c. Organizational DUNS:

0795219280000

### d. Address:

\* Street1:

375 Merrimack Street

Street2:

\* City:

Lowell

County/Parish:

\* State:

MA: Massachusetts

Province:

\* Country:

USA: UNITED STATES

\* Zip / Postal Code:

01852-1025

### e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:

Division Name:

### f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:

Ms.

\* First Name:

Sarah

Middle Name:

\* Last Name:

Brown

Suffix:

Title:

Environmental Officer

Organizational Affiliation:

\* Telephone Number:

978-674-4252

Fax Number:

978-970-4262

\* Email:

sbrown@lowellma.gov

## Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

### \* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:

C: City or Township Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

\* Other (specify):

### \* 10. Name of Federal Agency:

Environmental Protection Agency

### 11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

66.818

CFDA Title:

Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Cooperative Agreements

### \* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:

EPA-OLEM-OBLR-18-06

\* Title:

FY19 GUIDELINES FOR BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT GRANTS

### 13. Competition Identification Number:

Title:

### 14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

### \* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:

City of Lowell, Massachusetts - Former Commonwealth Chemical Corporation Assessment Grant

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments

Delete Attachments

View Attachments

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424****16. Congressional Districts Of:**

\* a. Applicant

MA3

\* b. Program/Project

MA3

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

**17. Proposed Project:**

\* a. Start Date:

10/01/2019

\* b. End Date:

09/30/2022

**18. Estimated Funding (\$):**

* a. Federal	350,000.00
* b. Applicant	0.00
* c. State	0.00
* d. Local	0.00
* e. Other	0.00
* f. Program Income	0.00
* g. TOTAL	350,000.00

**\* 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**☐ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on .☐ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.☒ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.**\* 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**☐ Yes☒ No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

**21. \*By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications\*\* and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances\*\* and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)**

☒ \*\* I AGREE

\*\* The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

**Authorized Representative:**

Prefix:

Ms.

\* First Name:

Eileen

Middle Name:

\* Last Name:

Donoghue

Suffix:

\* Title:

City Manager

\* Telephone Number:

978-674-4000

Fax Number:

978-970-4007

\* Email:

edonoghue@lowellma.gov

\* Signature of Authorized Representative:

Sarah Brown

\* Date Signed:

01/31/2019